

ZIDS RESEARCH NOTES

**INCORPORATING CO-OPERATIVE PRINCIPLES,
METHODS AND PROCEDURES INTO
THE STRUCTURAL ORGANISATION OF PUBLIC
ENTERPRISES IN ZIMBABWE FOR STATE
SUBSIDISATION OF SOCIALIST ACCUMULATION**

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Before independence, emphasis in the sphere of cooperative development was on input supply and marketing cooperatives and every attempt was made to discourage and proscribe any nascent collective cooperative largely on political and ideological grounds; i.e. it is the nature of property and relations of production within the enterprise rather than the technical production possibilities that distinguish this form of collective cooperatives from the input supply and marketing cooperatives.

The collective cooperative was introduced in Zimbabwe not as an accident or chance, but as a necessity of the socio-economic and political development, marking the turning point from capitalist relations of production to new and superior socialist relations of production. Thus simultaneously marking the beginning of the inevitable transitional period in National Economy in general and agricultural economy in particular, the struggle between the triumphant but still weak masses and the defeated but strong bourgeoisie class begun.

Collective cooperatives are socialist, voluntary socio-economic units carrying out allocated and self given economic objectives aimed at uplifting human living standards and the satisfaction of the growing material, social and spiritual needs of the masses. The collective cooperatives enjoy common ownership of the means of production, i.e. the members are the owners, workers and managers of the enterprise; democratic control by the member through their elected organs; absolute neutrality in racial, sexual, religious and political issues - although this does not rule out members belonging to any such group.

As a new concept in the economic, political and social local literature, the collective cooperatives' existence and progress touched the sensitive parts of the capitalist exploitative machine. The magnitude of the annoyance

manifested itself in the volume of theories that, since 1980 have been aired concerning the consolidation of collective cooperative in Zimbabwe; whether they achieve their goal of socialist transformation of the agriculture sector; whether the methods used are correct or not, the profitability of collective cooperatives, etc. What is left out of all these theories is the course of development of the collective cooperative; their technical-material base; their short and long term objectives, the principles, the crucial problem of cost reduction etc. Most of these theories, heard and read up to date, analyse the biased changes experienced in the social superstructure (Biased reflections of the problems experienced in the social base), and that puts clear the pressure and force of the advancement of collective cooperatives. These enterprises are still in their infant stages in Zimbabwe, but their existence since 1980 in the midst of stiff competition from large scale and small scale commercial farmers and their accomplices; hostilities from capitalist ideologists and politicians, leaves something on the minds of their enemies, that, 'Collective Cooperative Movement is Irreversible' and on those of their supporters, that, 'The goal will be achieved'. Referring to the progress of the collective cooperatives in an interview by Patricia Sethi of The Newsweek Magazine The first Secretary and President of Z.A.N.U. (P.F.) Comrade Mugabe said:

"On the peasants' side we have had tremendous problems - lack of land and that kind of thing. We have been organizing peasants too into coops. The well established peasant families, who don't desire to go into cooperatives are free not to do so. We don't force them: Younger men are more willing. I think we have more than 1 300 agricultural cooperatives established since independence. There are lots of state enterprises which are being established across the board".¹

The goals of the collective cooperatives and public enterprises as opposed to private enterprises is a question to be defined to most of our theorists who independently shout 'profitability' as the social or global objective,

pointing out their social class position if not the ignorance of the objective reality of the Zimbabwean situation since 1980 or both.

Collective Cooperative: Objectives and Principles.

The collective cooperative have short and long term objectives:

Short-term objectives:-

- The creation of technical-material base of socialism in the agriculture sector;
- Proportional and planned growth of collective cooperatives;
- Uplift the human standard of living of the cooperators;
- Recruit as many individual peasant farmers as possible;
- Struggle against the bourgeois ideology. As socialist organizations they are deemed to eliminate exploitative production relation and achieve greater social equality by eliminating class stratification based on ownership of the means of production.

Long term objectives:-

- The establishment of social property over the fundamental means of production in the agricultural sector;
- Proportional and planned development of the agriculture sector as an integral component of the National Economy;
- Satisfaction of the growing material, social and spiritual needs of the masses in general;
- The consolidation of the socialist society as the goal of our socialist orientated Government.

In the course of development, collective cooperativisation on national scale creates an integrated, well balanced front consistent with government's chosen path of socialist development, thus having common objectives with

the public enterprises existing in Zimbabwe, the collective cooperatives should not be exempted from government aid/help offered to public enterprises. This reflects the nexus or interrelationship which unites them in developing a potentially organized and planned socialist economy.

Basing on this relationship it becomes necessary to put to light the principles which support the formation and development of collective cooperatives, and these are:-

- Voluntariness
- Gradualness
- State Aid

The first principle has been practically explained by the existence of collective cooperative since 1980. Therefore much interest is directed to the last two principles.

- The establishment of a socialized sector made up of collective cooperatives as a foundation and vehicle towards socialist transformation of agriculture in an economy strongly based on capitalist relation of production must be gradual due to the following aspects:

- a) Old traditional peasantry forms of production have profound roots in their habits and customs which through generations have changed their way of thinking. In socialism these habits exist with great force in some peasantry sector and for these old forms to be eliminated it is necessary to display a systematic and patient political and ideological work to transform their psychology.

b) The advancement of collective cooperatives is produced gradually, passing through from the inferior to the superior, from the old traditional ways of production to technically advanced ways of production based on socialist relation of production.

- The state aid as one of the principles in the formation and development of collective cooperative should not be strictly material (Financial Equipments etc) but also moral and political.

In the process of the technical-material base construction (transition period) the state is asked to play an important and decisive role in uplifting the technical infrastructure of these enterprises through grants, loans and donations. That after setting a competitive spring-board for the future development of these socialist, voluntary socio-economic units. This once again points out the oneness of the collective cooperative and the public enterprises e.g. Parastatals (AFC, GMB, CMB, AGRITEX, AMA etc) should facilitate the channelling of resources to the collective cooperatives, solving their marketing problems in space and time, providing expertise and advice in their everyday activities, pricing of their products, thus also uplifting their moral to encounter any constraints possible.

Political and ideological aspects define the sensitive parts when dealing with collective enterprises, thus: -

1. The cooperators must economically, politically and ideologically define their enemies.
2. The aims and objectives of their chosen path must be conceptualized.
3. They must be well armed with the Marxist-Leninist ideology.
4. Government politics towards collective cooperatives must be defined.

The state must help in all these points, that is, to build a strong-hold and political shield for the units in their struggle against the sophisticated and well manipulated capitalist political manoeuvres.

- Divisionists have sensed the progress of Collective cooperatives, which is now more than a mere threat to the interests of the capitalists and their established puppets. They are now resorting to all phylosophical formular (idealistic, metaphysic, etc) to curb this challenging progress. These theorists wearing Marxist-Leninist 'Leather-jackets' attack the viability and performance of cooperatives from the simultaneous process, base of their formation in 1980, thus taking Marxist-Leninist scientific socialism as a block of Laws, principles and methods which can be imported and inserted as it is in any country without considering its existing reality. Why take the Tanzanian Ujamaa as an example of what is going to happen in Zimbabwe. It is more than clear even to the cooperators themselves that scientific socialism is their phylosophy and not 'African Socialism' phylosophy which is the ideological back-bone of Ujamaa.

It should be put clear to those theorists, that capitalism at this height can not be served from complete destruction and the Government socialist goal is unavoidable; as comrade Prime Minister in his New Year's message puts it:-

"Thus over and above the objective of achieving high and sustained rates of growth and development across the sectors and in the interests of all our people, the plan is designed to change the ownership and relation of the structure of the existing economy as a strategy for creating a National and socialist economy".²

NOTES

1. Zimbabwe News Vol. 17, No. 2. page 19.
2. Zimbabwe News Vol. 17, No. 2. page 9.

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